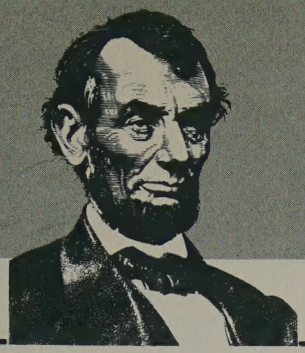


Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

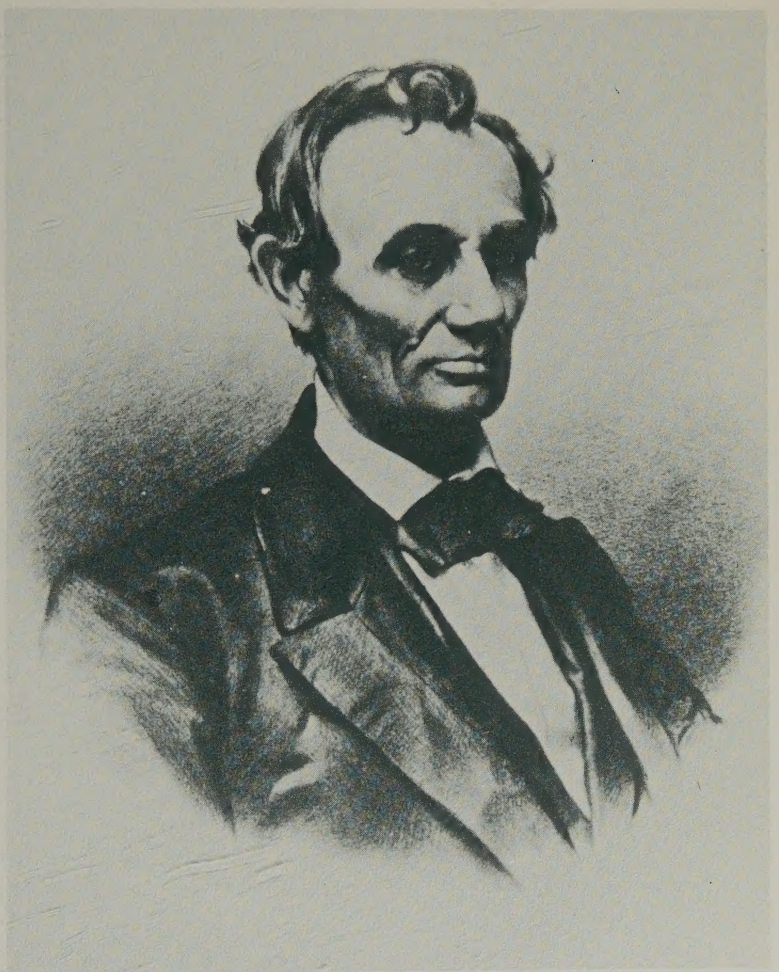
Number 1469 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA July, 1960

JOHNSTON'S "LOST" LINCOLN PORTRAIT

Following Abraham Lincoln's nomination for the presidency more than twenty artists went to Springfield, Illinois to make portraits of the Republican candidate. Some of these artists had remarkable success in portraying their subject, while others apparently met with failure because of a lack of ability or because of their inability to engage Mr. Lincoln for a series of sittings.

The published beardless portraits from life by Thomas Hicks, Charles A. Barry, Alban J. Conant, Henry J. Brown, George Frederick Wright and Thomas M. Johnston are best remembered as contributing something definite to an understanding of Lincoln's personal appearance in the presidential campaign of 1860.

But, what became of Thomas M. Johnston's portrait of Lincoln made at at Springfield in July 1860? Why was a lithograph of a retouched photograph made by C. S. German in 1860 (M. No. 9), published with the initials T. M. J.? Johnston had the cooperation of the Republican candidate. His letters reveal that he was enthusiastic about his work. Did Johnston fail at the crucial moment when he had a chance to make his name immortal? Did his sponsor, C. H. Brainard, a Boston, Masschusetts lithographer, think Johnston's work unworthy of his subject?



The lithograph of C. S. German's slightly retouched photograph (Meserve No. 9) bearing under the left shoulder the initials T. M. J.

The artist's correspondence with Brainard who commissioned the portrait, with his father who was called the "American Cruikshank" and Brainard's letter to Johnston reveal a story of a decidedly successful mission. Johnston was about twenty-four years of age at the time he went to Springfield. He was well known in Boston as a portrait artist who excelled in crayon and charcoal. He had the faculty of sketching quickly and getting a characteristic likeness. He was of a family of artists—father, mother brother and sisters, were all artists. His father, David Claypole Johnston, was the famous illustrator and caricaturist.

In addition to the training Thomas M. Johnston received from his father, he also studied with Samuel Rowse, who was considered the best crayon portrait artist of his time and with William Morris Hunt, who was generally regarded as the foremost painter in America during the middle period of the last century. According to A. J. Philpott, *Boston Globe*, February 7, 1932 " 'Tom' Johnston was a great favorite of Hunt, as were his brother, John B. Johnston (landscape and cattle painter) and his sister, Sarah J. T. Johnston."

C. H. Brainard was the enterprising Boston lithographic publisher who sent Tom Johnston to Illinois in July of 1860 to secure Lincoln's portrait for reproduction on a lithographic stone. Brainard sensed the demands of the public for Lincoln's portrait during the forthcoming election campaign of that year.

Johnston went to Springfield with the necessary letters of introduction, in the hope that the candidate of the Republican party would sit for his portrait. This request would not be a new experience for Lincoln. The "Railsplitter" had permitted Leonard W. Volk in Chicago to make a life mask of his face and hands. Likewise, on numerous occasions Lincoln had sat for photographers. Johnston was not

even the first artist for whom Lincoln had sat for a portrait. One of the earliest, if not the first portraits made of the presidential nominee from life was done by Thomas Hicks who was in Springfield working on a Lincoln portrait as early as June 12th. In fact, Hicks completed his portrait on June 13, 1860.

Apparently Charles A. Barry made the second portrait of Lincoln from life. Barry was sent to Illinois by a group of Boston citizens, including the governor of the state, to make a portrait of Lincoln. He arrived in Springfield on the last Saturday in June, 1860 and presented his letter of introduction from Governor Banks. Barry's crayon drawing has been designated as "The Greek God." It was carved on stone by J. E. Baker and litographed by J. H. Bufford. In his correspondence with Brainard, July 23, 1860, Johnston mentioned both the Hicks and Barry portraits. It appears from the evidence available that Johnston was the third portrait artist to request of Lincoln a sitting.

Prior to the summer of 1860 most of the pictures of Lincoln that had appeared in illustrated papers were at best caricatures. Now that Lincoln was the Republican candidate for the presidency it was necessary for the public-at-large to get a correct idea of the features of the man who was variously described as ugly, grotesque and a cross between a derrick and a windmill. These portrait painters who journeyed to Springfield had a real service to perform. Johnston's correspondence indicates that he had every reason to believe that his work was a "decided success." The four letters Johnston wrote to Brainard are in the manuscript collection of the Lin-National Life Foundation.

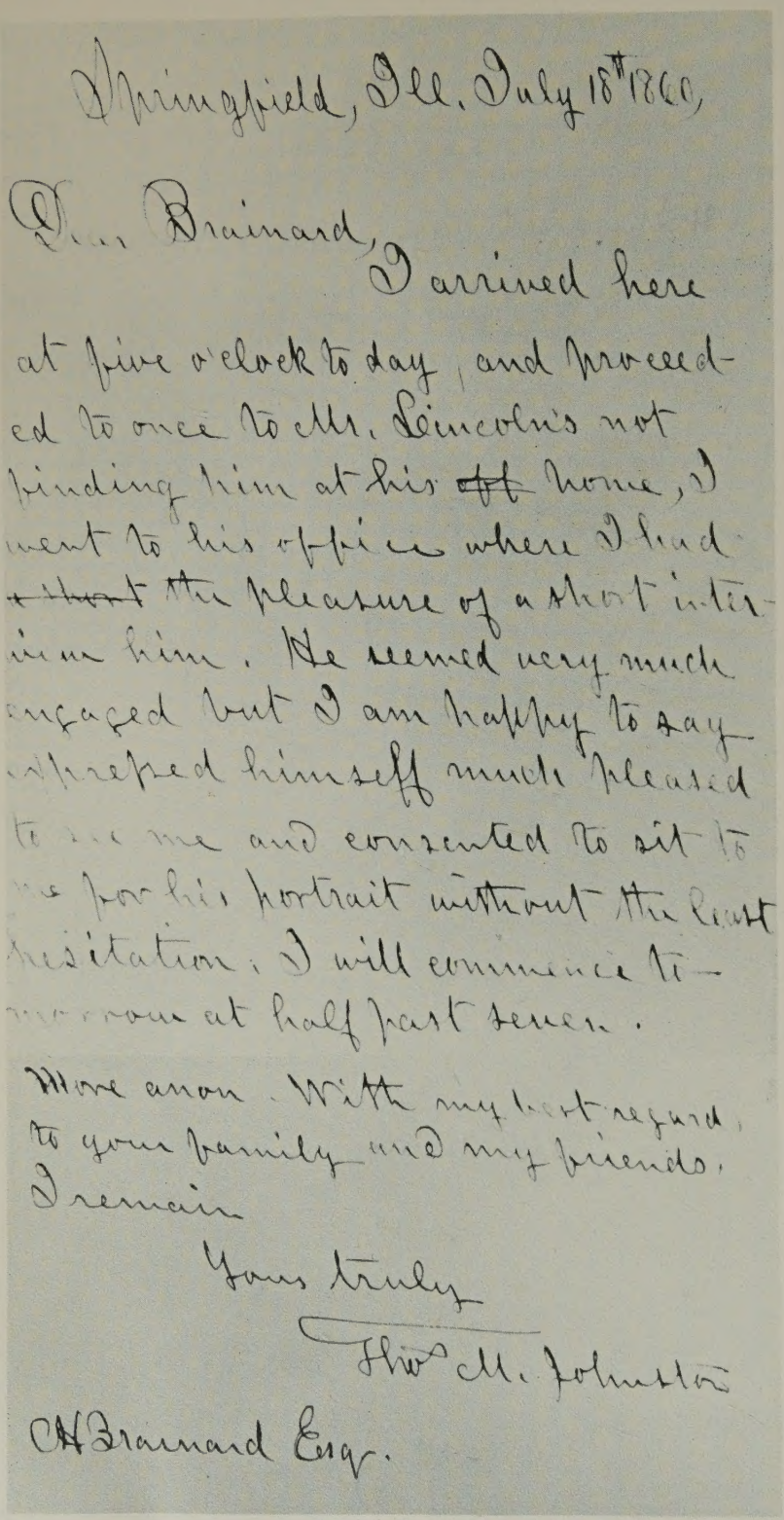
"Springfield, Ill.
July 18th 1860

"Dear Brainard:

I arrived here at five o'clock today, and proceeded to once to Mr. Lincoln's not finding him at his home, I went to his office where I had the pleasure of a short interview(with)him. He seemed very much engaged but I am happy to say expressed himself much pleased to see me and consented to sit to me for his portrait without the least hesitation. will commence tomorrow at half past seven. More Anon. With my best regards to your family and my friends, I remain.

"Yours truly
Thos. M. Johnston"

"C. H. Brainard Esq.


Springfield, Ill. July 18th 1860,

D.r Brainard, I arrived here at five o'clock to day, and proceeded to once to Mr. Lincoln's not finding him at his ~~off~~ home, I went to his office where I find ~~that~~ the pleasure of a short interview him. He seemed very much engaged but I am happy to say expressed himself much pleased to see me and consented to sit to me for his portrait without the least hesitation. I will commence tomorrow at half past seven. More anon. With my best regard to your family and my friends. I remain

Yours truly

Thos M. Johnston

C H Brainard Esq.

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation Collection

Original letter written by Thos. M. Johnston to C. H. Brainard on July 18, 1860.

Fortunately the five letters Johnston wrote to his father from Springfield are extant. As late as 1932 these letters were in the possession of Rev. Fr. Richard S. Cartwright of St. Paul's College, Washington, D. C. Father Cartwright is a nephew of Johnston. The first letter to David Claypoole Johnston follows:

"Springfield, Ill.
July 19, 1860

"Dear Father:

"I saw Mr. Lincoln soon after my arrival. He had hardly read one letter before he consented to sit, and appointed tomorrow morning for the first sitting.

"Your affectionate son
Thos. M. Johnston"

On July 20 Johnston wrote Brainard a second letter:

"Springfield
July 20th 1860

"Dear Brainard:

"I have not yet seen Mr. Lincoln's home except from the outside and cannot give you a glowing description of it nor its inmates. I commenced the portrait today under the most favorable circumstances. I feel sure of getting a good thing. Perhaps I shall be able to send you 'an interesting letter tomorrow I will try.

"I have just 27 dollars in pocket and as my board bill will amount to about 15 dollars and my fare 3 more than I now possess, I am obliged to call on you to fill the gap.

"Ever your friend
"Thos. M. Johnston

"Please send papers."

Brainard answered this letter, a typewritten copy of which is in the Foundation files:

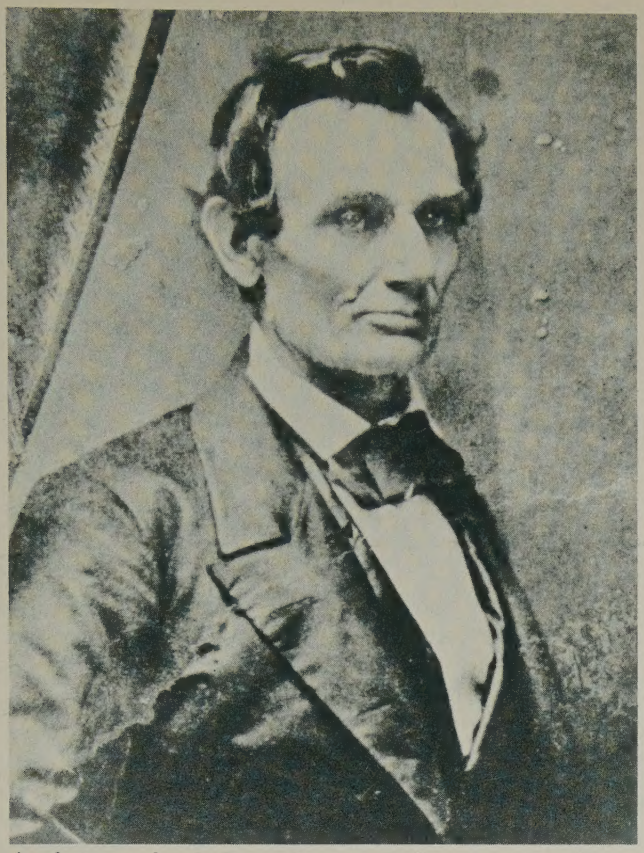
"Boston, July 26, 1860

"Dear Johnston,

"Yours of the 20th came to hand last evening.

"I am delighted to learn that you are sanguine of your success in making a good picture of Lincoln. I hope that it will be not only a characteristic likeness but a pleasing picture. All the pictures that have yet been issued leave an unfavorable impression upon the minds of the spectators. I feel quite confident that your picture will be the picture of the man!

"I have been at work all the morning to raise some money to send you, but my success has been very slight. I have a promise of a small sum at



A photograph of the ambrotype believed to have been made by C. S. German in Springfield in 1860 (Meserve No. 9 & Lorant No. 24). This photograph was presented by Lincoln to Harriet Chapman, Dennis Hanks' daughter, with the statement, "This is not a very good-looking picture, but it is the best that could be produced from the poor subject." This photograph became the Johnston-Brainard lithograph of 1860.

noon, and if I get it I will enclose it. In case I should fail to send you all you need you must not hesitate to call on McNally & Co. of Chicago, who will advance you enough to get home. As I wrote you in a former letter they have offered to do all in their power to assist you in displaying the picture. I have left with them nearly 1,000 small portraits of Douglas which they will deem good collateral for a small advance.

"I think I never knew business as dull as it has been for the last two weeks. The picture buyers must be dead or out of town, for no pictures are called for. Business **must** revive before long.

"The 'Bee', which I sent you with this, copies the notice from the 'Transcript', of last evening, (July 25, 1860).

"I suppose you will be nearly ready to leave for Chicago by the time this reaches you.

" 'G. T.' " saw Barry's portrait this morning for the first time, and thought it very bad. He thinks the lithograph fails to do justice to the crayon.

"Don't forget to get all the testimonials you can as to the accuracy, etc. of your portrait. 'We must keep blowing' and thus make the public shell out. I feel certain that everybody will be **clamorous** for the picture, and it is **meet** they should be, considering how much we **staked** upon it.

"Of course you will let the Springfield editors see the picture, and get them to notice it. Please be particular to forward the notices, that I may have them copied here.

"I think I had better get a frame ready for the picture. In your reply to this please tell me if I shall have an **oval** or a **square** panel.

"I just called to see your father and found him laying himself out on a large sheet of paper, which you will probably receive with this. The old gentleman is in great spirits, and thinks you will make a tremendous hit. His eyes actually sparkled and moistened with delight.

"Faithfully Yours
"C. H. Brainard

"P. S. Please get a signature of Mr. Lincoln to be transferred to the stone, and about a dozen of his autographs for distribution amongst autograph collectors.

"When you get to Chicago you had better ascertain how long it will take you to reach N. Y. deducting one day at Niagara Falls. I want to arrange matters so that I can meet you at N. Y. on the morning of or after your arrival there, and be prepared to return to Boston the same evening.

"**Mem.** Greater than Moses, who brought water from a rock, I extract money from Lithographic Stones, and enclose **Ten dollars.**"

On July 20th Johnston wrote a second letter to his father:

"Springfield, July 20, 1860

"Dear father:

"Mr. Lincoln sat today by appointment at his office, which makes a fine studio.

"Mr. Lincoln is a very tall, awkward-looking man, but with a face and head that I really consider beautiful in the extreme, when compared with all the pictures that have been published over his name.

"This fact is very encouraging to me. I had reason to expect to see a face that reminded one of an over-sized pear than anything else. Mr. Lincoln's title of ugly must be owing to his figure entirely.

"Tell Mr. Brainard that he can count on an attractive picture and a good likeness of Mr. Lincoln, and that I will make one, for Mr. Lincoln is a good sitter. He makes a business of it. I will go again tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m.

"Your affectionate son,
"Thomas."

Unfortunately a portion of Johnston's third letter to his father is missing:

"Springfield, Ill., July 22, 1860

"Dear Father:

"Mr. Lincoln sat for the second time yesterday, and I have make good progress. I hope to finish it in three more sittings, for he is a first-rate sitter, and a much better looking man than I had reason to suppose him to be. His ugliness is entirely owing to his figure.

"Next Wednesday will be a great day here in consequence of the Democratic convention which meets here. The Douglas element is very strong. He will beat Lincoln."
(Remainder of letter missing).

Johnston's third letter to Brainard follows:

"Springfield, Ill. July 22, 1860

"Dear Brainard:

I wrote you immediately on my arrival here but forgot all about the telegragh. How I overlooked this is more than I can comprehend and feel much ashamed of myself in consequence.

"Mr. Lincoln has not yet invited me to his home, therefore I have not yet seen any of his family except himself.

"I have had two satisfactory sittings from him and feel certain of being able to make a likeness that every Republican will have reason to be proud of: for I believe no man's personal appearance has been so variously misrepresented as the Hon-Abraham Lincoln's. I was not aware that it was possible for photographs taken from life to so misrepresent the human face. The only one that gives any idea of him is the profile which I told you before I left Boston I prefered to all others: this is somewhat like him but does not do him justice. Volk's bust gives a good general idea of him but lacks detail. Barry's original drawing is like him in very many respects but the lithograph from it is a failure.

"Mr. Lincoln has a fine head and face the expression of which indicates an amiable disposition combined with great force of character. The upper part of his head is quite Websterian. Mr. Lincoln's title of 'Ugly' must be owing entirely to his figure and gait; the length of the former destroying to some extent the grace of the latter. I am quite well and enjoy my visit much. Please write me a long letter.

"Your friend
"Thos. M. Johnston.

"P. S.—By the time you receive this, the picture will be almost done perhaps finished entirely. No I am wrong: what I mean to say is that the picture will probably be completed by the time **I receive** an answer to this provided you send by return mail."

The next day Johnston wrote his fourth letter to Brainard, prompted, perhaps, by the receipt of a letter from his correspondent. Brainard's letter, which Johnston acknowledged on July 23rd, is not known to be extant.

"Springfield July 23, 1860

"Dear Brainard

I was delighted to hear from you today and hope you will write often. Mr. Lincoln sits every day early in the morning thus far I have had three sittings and the picture is nearly done. I thank you for paving my way for me in Chicago. I presume I shall feel quite at home there in consequence. I am sorry that I have been unable as yet to see a copy of Hick's picture. He should have sent one to Mr. Lincoln before now; however if it is no better than Volk's bust I am not afraid of it. Mr. Lincoln and myself are good friends and get along well together. He is very much pleased with my work: he says B's lith. it a total failure: he also says that B's **original drawing** pleased Mrs. Lincoln better than Hick's portrait so I think I have no reason to fear Hicks. Everybody laughs at B's lith. in this city—it is very unpopular. That was a funny idea of Barry's that the journey would be too much for me. I felt very well when I arrived washed and brushed up at a lager beer shop near the depot left my trunks with the baggage master and proceeded at once to Mr. Lincoln's this was a few minutes past five P. M. after 36 hours of rail. I saw Mr. L. and agreed to meet him at half past seven the next morning. I then crossed the street and engaged a room in the American House, and sent for my trunk: between 5 and 6 the next morning I commenced arranging and after breakfast fulfilled my appointment. I felt quite well and have ever since I arrived. My regards to all.

"Your friend
"Johnston

"With regard to obtaining subscription money in advance all I can do is to try and that I will."

Johnston left Springfield on July 26th according to the fourth letter he wrote to his father:

"Springfield, Ill. July 26, 1860

"Dear Father:

"I leave for Chicago tonight. The picture is a decided success.
"Thomas."

The artist's promotional work in Chicago was also encouraging and the newspapers gave Johnston and his portrait some publicity. His concluding fifth letter to his father follows:

(Continued on page 4)

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY—1959

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members; Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Road, Garden City, N. Y.; Carl Haverlin, 2 Masterson Road, Bronxville, N. Y.; E. B. Long, 708 North Kenliworth Ave., Oak Park, Ill.; Richard F. Lufkin, 45 Milk Street Boston, 9 Mass.; Wayne C. Temple, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn.; Ralph G. Newman, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago 11, Ill.; William H. Townsend, 310 First National Bank Bldg., Lexington 3, Ky.; and Clyde C. Walton, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Ill.

New items available for consideration may be sent to the above addresses or to the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

Editor's Note: During the remainder of the year (1960) the **Lincoln Lore** Cumulative Bibliography will carry many additional 1959 Lincoln titles as the publications are acquired and compiled. Again it is necessary to state that United States Information Service items are not available for distribution in the United States and requests for publications listed are not obtainable in Washington, D. C. or post aboard.

1959

—ARABIC—

ANGLE, PAUL 1959-194

(Translation): Lincoln Supplement to weekly newspaper, Cairo, Egypt.

Folder, paper, 10¾" x 16½", (8) pp., illus. Distributed by U. S. Information Service, 6 Sh. Kamal Eldin Salah, Garden City, Cairo. Printed in the Arabic language.

SHERWOOD, ROBERT EMMET 1959-195

(Translation): Abe Lincoln in Illinois/A Play in Twelve Scenes by Robert Emmet Sherwood.

Book, flexible boards, 5¼" x 7½", (132) pp. Published October 6, 1959 by Al-Khal Brothers, Beirut, Lebanon. Printed in the Arabic language.

SHERWOOD, ROBERT EMMET & OTHERS 1959-196

(Translation): Three American plays including Abe Lincoln in Illinois by Sherwood: The Hasty Heart by Patrick and The Great Sebastians by Lindsay and Crouse.

Book, flexible boards, 5¼" x 7¾", (284) pp., Published by Al-Khal Brothers, Beirut, Lebanon. Printed in the Arabic language.

—BURMESE—

d'AULAIRE, INGRI AND EDGAR PARIN 1959-197

(Translation): Abraham Lincoln/Adapted from the original Doubleday and Company edition, which was written and illustrated by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire.

Pamphlet, paper, 8¼" x 10½", (12) pp., illus. Juvenile. Distributed by the U. S. Information Service. Printed in the Burmese language. See 1959-88.

McNEER, MAY 1959-198

America's/Abraham Lincoln./January 1959/Copyright 1957 by May McNeer Ward and Lynn Ward./. . ./. . ./ . . ./Shumawa Press/No. 1, Sandwith Road Rangoon.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 6¼" x 8½", (76) pp., Illus. Printed in the Burmese language. Translation of 1957-50.

—FRENCH—

MONAGHAN, JAMES JAY 1959-199

Manifestation d'Amitie/Martinico-Americaine/Allocutions prononcees/par/.Monsier John W. Russell, Vice-Counsul des U.S.A. a fort-de France/. . ./Monsier le professeur James Jay Monaghan . . ./Monsieur Louis Adrasse/. . ./lore des manifestations d'amitie martinicoles 17 et 19 Aout 1959 . . ./Imp. Bezaudin/Fort-de-France —Martinique/1959/. . ./100 Francs.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 5½" x 8¼", 16 pp. Published in Martinique by the "Cercle Victor Schoelcher." Printed in the French language.

—GREEK—

CHARNWOOD, LORD 1959-200

(Translation): Abraham Lincoln/Lord Charnwood/(Godfrey Rathbone Benson)/"Select Pocket Books."/Athens.

Book, flexible boards, 4½" x 6¾", 192 pp. Distributed by the U. S. Information Service. Printed in the Greek language.

NEA ESTIA 1959-201

(Translation): Nea Estia/April 15, 1959/Special Abraham Lincoln edition.

Pamphlet, paper, 7" x 10", 67 pp., 38 pp. devoted to Lincoln. Published in Greece. Printed in the Greek language.

—ITALIAN—

CRONACHE D'ALTRI TEMPI 1959-202

Numero speciale per il 150 Anniversario della nascita di Abramo Lincoln/Anno VI—1959 26 febb.-25 marzo/no. 58/Abramo Lincoln/Liberatore-Unificatore/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, paper, 9½" x 13½", (30) pp., illus. Special Lincoln edition. Published in Rome. Printed in the Italian language.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE 1959-203

Abraham Lincoln/1809-1865/United States Information Service/Roma 1959.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 5½" x 7¾", 26 pp., illus. Contains articles: La personalita di Abraham Lincoln by Robert L. Kincaid and Lincoln uomo e scrittore by Earl Schenck Miers. Published by Litho U.S.I.S. Via Boncompagni, 2, Roma. Printed in the Italian language.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE 1959-204

Abraham Lincoln/Il Discorse/di/Gettysburg/19 Novembre 1863/(Cover title).

Folder, paper, (4) pp. Published by LITO USIS, via Boncompagni, 2, Roma. Printed in the Italian language.

—SPANISH—

MURPHY, EDMUND R. 1959-205

Instituto Cultural Argentino Norteamericano/Edmund R. Murphy/Abraham Lincoln/an. 1859/Buenos Aires/1959.

Pamphlet, paper, 6" x 9", 22 pp. Distributed by U. S. Information Service. Printed in the Spanish language.

SANDBURG, CARL 1959-206

La Voz/De Un/Poeta/En El/Congreso/(The Voice of a Poet in Congress)/(photo of Sandburg)/. . ./. . ./. . ./. . ./. . ./. . ./(photo of Lincoln)/Ano Aniversario/1959/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, paper, 5¼" x 8½", 8 pp. Distributed by U. S. Information Service. Published in Argentina in the Spanish language.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE 1959-207

Abraham Lincoln/(Ensayos)/CL Aniversario/Madrid/1959/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, paper, 6¼" x 8¼, 38 pp., illus. Contains 4 essays on Abraham Lincoln. Distributed by U. S. Information Service, Madrid. Printed in the Spanish language.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE 1959-208

(Head of Lincoln) . . .y que el gobierno del pueblo, para el pueblo y por el pueblo, no desparezca de sobre la faz de la tierra/Abraham Lincoln/Novembre 19, 1863/Ano Lincoln/1959/(Cover title).

Pamphlet, paper, 6½" x 10½", (12) pp., illus. Distributed by U. S. Information Service in Mexico. Printed in the Spanish language.

—TURKISH—

THOMAS, BENJAMIN P. 1959-209

(Translation): Abraham Lincoln/A Biography by Benjamin P. Thomas/Volume 1.

Book, flexible boards, 5½" x 7¾", 256 pp., fr., illus. Published by Nebioglu Yayinevi, Istanbul, Turkey. Printed in the Turkish language. Distributed by U. S. Information Service.

THOMAS, BENJAMIN P. 1959-210

(Translation): Abraham Lincoln/A Biography by Benjamin P. Thomas/Volume 2.

Book, flexible boards, 5½" x 7¾", 257-512 pp., fr., illus. Published by Nebioglu Yayinevi, Istanbul. Turkey. Printed in the Turkish language. Distributed by U. S. Information Service.

GARFINKLE, NORTON 1959-211

(Device)/Lincoln and the Coming of/The Civil War. Edited with an introduction by/Norton Garfinkle/Problems in American Civilization/Readings Selected by/The Department of American Studies/Amherst College/D. C. Heath and Company: Boston.

Book, flexible boards, 6½" x 9¼", 113 pp., price $1.50.

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE 1959-212

Abraham Lincoln/Sesquicentennial Celebration/A Selective Reading List/(Lincoln photo)/United States Information Service/in Italy/February 12, 1959.

Pamphlet, paper, 4" x 9", 8 pp. Printed by Tipografia Operaia Romana.

JOHNSTON'S PORTRAIT

(Continued from page 3)

"Niagara Falls, July 29, 1860

"Dear Father

"Inclosed you will find a notice of my portrait of Lincoln from the Chicago Daily Journal of the 27th July. The Chicago Tribune-Democrat will also notice it. The Tribune is the great Republican organ of the West. The two latter notices were to appear on the 28th July.

"Your affectionate son,

"Thos. M. Johnston."

One wonders what happened when Johnston showed his portrait to Brainard in New York City following the artist's sojurn to Niagara Falls. Brainard brought out a lithograph of Lincoln in 1860 but it was not a reproduction of Johnston's painting from life. It was a slightly retouched lithograph of a photograph made by C. S. German, the Springfield photographer whose studio was located on the State House Square. In all probability German had made his Lincoln photograph while Johnston was in Springfield. However, Johnston had complained "how photographs taken from life misrepresent the human face." It must have been rather ironical for a true artist to have his initials appear on a retouched photograph after he had such a "decided success" in Springfield.

See: **Lincoln Lore**, No. 913, Oct. 7, 1946
Lincoln Lore, No. 313, April 8, 1935

Biographical note: "Thomas M. Johnston also drew on stone portraits of John Howard Payne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Sumner, John Brown, Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison. After a year or more he gave up lithographic work. It was too confining.

"He was an excellent landscape painter as well as a portrait painter. There is an altar piece in the Church Of The Immaculate Conception on Harrison Avenue (Boston, Mass.) which he painted.

"After the Civil War he went to France to study and died as the result of an operation in Paris, February 29, 1869, when he was 33 years of age."

Boston Globe, Feb. 7, 1932.